

**Washington D.C.** - Today Rep. Dan Lungren (R-CA) released the following statement concerning the withdrawal of U.S. forces from major Iraqi cities. This marks an important milestone as the country's security forces take the lead in securing the Iraqi population in urban areas:

"Today is the day our armed forces turn over security operations, in major urban areas, solely to the Iraqis themselves. Two years ago, the Iraqi Surge Strategy began. Its primary goal was to help increase the level of security in Bagdad and Al Anbar province. Violence has declined dramatically since then and today some 500,000 Iraqi police will command the streets. This day is an important step forward for the people of Iraq.

"Let us all remember to give thanks to the men and women of our armed forces. They continue to serve their country with honor and professionalism. I am grateful for their service to our country.

"Members of Congress should use this day as an opportunity to renew our commitment to provide our troops with all the funding and support they need. We must work with the President to make sure our commanders and troops are equipped to carryout their remaining mission."

**Information Courtesy of the House Armed Services Committee:**

**U.S.-Iraq Strategic Agreement.** On November 17, 2008, U.S. and Iraqi officials signed two key new agreements, designed to define the terms of their future partnership at the strategic and operational levels.

- The first document was the broad Strategic Framework Agreement, designed to provide a basis for future cooperation in multiple fields including diplomacy, culture, economics and energy, health and the environment, information technology, and law enforcement.
- The second document, the Security Agreement, was similar to a status of forces agreement (SOFA). It was the product of a contentious negotiations process that began in spring 2008. It elaborated the terms of the bilateral security partnership at the operational level, and provided the legal basis for the U.S. troop presence in Iraq.
- The Security Agreement underscored both Iraqi sovereignty and the "temporary" nature of the U.S. military presence, and it imposed a number of constraints on the presence and operations of U.S. forces. It provided for the withdrawal of all U.S. combat forces from Iraqi cities and towns by June 30, 2009, and for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq by December 31, 2011.
- The Security Agreement required that U.S. forces coordinate all military operations with Iraqi authorities. It tightly constrained the role of U.S. forces in detaining Iraqis and mandated the transfer of current detainees to Iraqi custody.

**President Obama's Redeployment Plan.** On February 27, 2009, President Obama announced "a new strategy to end the war in Iraq through a transition to full Iraqi responsibility," which called for the withdrawal of all U.S. combat forces by August 31, 2010.

- That decision marked the culmination of a comprehensive strategic review of Iraq war efforts that President Obama ordered on his first full day in office.
- Military commanders were reportedly asked to review alternative 16-month, 19-month, and 23-month timeline options for the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces.
- According to the new policy, after August 2010, the U.S. forces' focus in Iraq will:
- Shift to a three-pronged mission: training, equipping, and advising the Iraqi security forces

(ISF);

- Conduct targeted counter-terrorism operations; and
- Provide force protection for both civilian and military personnel.
- The so-called "transitional force" will initially include between 35,000 and 50,000 troops.
- All remaining U.S. forces are expected to be withdrawn by the end of 2011, in accordance with the U.S.-Iraqi Security Agreement.

**U.S. Force Levels in Iraq.** On February 27, 2009, there were approximately 140,000 U.S. troops deployed in Iraq, including 14 Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) or equivalents, as well as a significantly larger number of support forces.

- On March 8, 2009, Administration officials announced that 12,000 U.S. troops would redeploy from Iraq without replacement by September 2009.
- Administration officials have suggested that between 10 and 12 BCTs would remain on the ground at the time of Iraq's national elections tentatively planned for the end of 2009.
- The key components of the "transitional force" are expected to be "Advise and Assist Brigades" (AABs).
- AABs are expected to work closely with U.S. civilian counterparts, including Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs); those relationships, including co-location and the degree and kind of support provided to civilian efforts, is likely to vary geographically across Iraq.

